

The argument vpon the fyrst

Epistle of the apostle. S. Iohn by Erasmus
of Rotterdam.

Fol. rli.



That this is Saincte Iohn the apostles epistle, whiche wrote the Gospell, the very stile of the wordes selfe is a playne argument. He maketh muche a booe in the reherfall of lighte and darkenes, life and death, here and loue, in often repeatinge the wordes, as though they were taken out of the sayinge nexte before. Of the whiche sorte, to open up sayinge more plainly by example, this is one: *Loue not the vvorlde, neither those thinges that are in the vvorlde.* Yf any manne looe the vvorlde, the loue of the father is not in hym, for all that is in the vvorlde etc. And anon after: *He is not of the father, but of the vvorlde; and the vvorlde passeth awaye.* How often here is the wordes repeated & finally in all his sayinge there is litte compendious shortnes, and more open plainesse than in the writinge of the reste of the apostles. And as for the stile, it is more evidently plaine, than nedeth any argument, like as the two Epistles followinge are, whiche are ascribed to one Iohn a certayne senior, and not to Iohn the apostle.

Thus endeth the Argumente.

The paraphrase of Erasmus vpon on the firste Epistle of Sainct Iohn.

The firste Chapter.

That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have touched with our hands, and our hands have handled, of the worde of the life: and the life appeared, and we have seen and heard witness, and shew vnto you that eternal life, which was with the father, and appeared vnto vs. That which we have seen and heard, heretofore we shew vnto you, that ye also maye haue fellowshipe with vs, and that our fellowshipe maye be with the father and his sonne Iesus Christe. and thus a litle we shew vnto you, that ye maye receiue, and that yowre hope maye be full.

The tenth.



We write not vnto you, dearely beloved brethren, of venter or meane thinges, or of thinges vnknewen, but of a newe matter: howbeit so newe vnto vs, that with God it was from euertlasting. This is the worde of God, euen Iesus Christe bothe God and manne: whiche where he was alwayes the sonne of God, woulde of late be the sonne of a mayden: and which after hys diuine nature was invisible to mans eyes, vouchsafed to take vpon hym an humaine boode: and did vouchsafed to be familiarly conuersant among men, that he mighte carrie vs vp from the darkenes of our ignorance to the light of Gospellike

The paraphrase of Erasmus vpon the .I. epistle

pelike knowlage: and that we myght begynne to beholde him with the eyes of our minde, whome we haue presentie see with the eyes of our bodye. In the deede vnderste of mannes harte required, that the trithe shoulde bee credited by grosse outward experymentes: but yet the godlynes of them is more presentie by his olde wordes, whiche wher they neyther had seene him with theyr eyes, ne handled him with theyr handes, yet were moste certainly perswaded and beleued that he is the sonne of God, and thonly auer of mannes saluacion. It is our parte therfore, to declare that, whiche we haue moste certainly proued by our bodily senses, vnto those that chauce not to see it, and yet it is exptient to beleue, that none ought to trust to haue life, nor euerylastinge saluacion, but he that beleueth the Gospelles doctrine, wherof we are both witnessis and preachers. It is not the worde of manne, neither of light imposturance, but it is the worde of God, and of heauen, that geueth euerylastyng life to them, whiche geue abroient hearyng vnto it and deliucting from the deathe of synne, from what so euer religyion, from what so euer kynde of life they shall suene them selues vnto it. Of this matter þ we speake of we speake of most assured credence, þ is to wete, euen the thing which we þ here continual wauntours heare with our eares law with our eyes, necher saue we asatte of, or passyng by, but we looked presently on to the full. And to cause a thinge to be credited, there are two principall chief senses, and if that also bee but a small matter, we did not only heare hym teaching, prayyng, commaundyng wyndes and deuilles, and the father sondry tymes bearing witness vnto the sonne, and we saue hym not only worke myracles, suffre deathe and rylt agayne: but also we haue handled with these handes of oures. For whan he was rylt agayne from deathe, to sturment to make vs beleue absolutely that he was no wayne phantastie, but euen the same manne alwe agayne, whom we had seene before dead, he caused vs to handle him with our handes, and layyng to our fingers he shewed vs the places of his woundes. Thankynde was deade, bycause it was in thyaldoine of vices and synnes: and he suffred deathe for our wickednes, that through his goodnesse we myght spue vnto Innocency. We were in doubt also our selues, whan we saue hym dead, whan we saue hym buried, but whan he rose agayne from deathe, he gaue vs sure hope of life. Thankynde had had no manner of hope of eternall life, except he had caused vs to see him with our eyes, and if he had not plucked awaye all doubtfulnes fro vs, by most manifestly apparent experymentes. He beinge manne suffred paynes for our synnes, and the same beinge God dooeth feely geue immortall life to them that put theyr saythfull trust in hym. He lyued alwayes with the father, and this life was alwayes determinately purposed for vs by the sonne, howbeit this counsaill was not yet published vnto the world, albeit the nation of the Jewes (and yet none but they) looked for it by the prophetes oracles, as it were in a dyaime. In the meane while deathe reigned, life laye hidden. Some fixed theyr hope in woldes, some in worldly wisdomme, but the saluacion and life of all people was Iesus Christe, the worde of God the father, the teacher of Innocency, and the geuer of Immortalitie. For none lyueth, but he that lyueth godly, necher dooeth any escape deathe, but he that attenyeth Immortalitie. At length thus (Iesus christe) manifested him selfe vnto the world by hym selfe, shewing him selfe playnly to all the senses of man, and so thrustyng him selfe in to the consciences of menne. And therfore he would haue vs to be lokers on and witnesses of all thinges, that he did on earth, to thintents

chintent they myght be faithfully published by our preachinge throughout all the whole vniuersall world: that like as we by Iesus haue obteyned life and saluacion, in case we perseuer still in the Gospelles doctrine, euen so shoulde you also come with vs in to the felowshyppe and company of this saluacion, in case you geue credence to our witness bearing, concerning the thinge that you neither hearde nor sawe of hym, but learn it by our preachinge. We are neither dayne witnesses ne yet vncommaunded. He bad vs to bee faithfull witnesses, and we recorde vnto all men with the greate daungee of our head, none othes thinge than we haue most euydent experience of, with all the sentences of the booke. We are happye, in that our sars and eyes haue made vs beleue, and yet you are neuertheles happye, if you geue credence vnto hys witness bearers. Our fathe hathe giued vs vnto Christe, and made vs the children of God and members of Christe: And your faith also shall engraffe you vnto the same booke, that beinge ioyned with vs in the felowshyppe of faith, you myght make one booke. And so shall it come to passe, that we shall not only bee all of one mynde amonge our selues, as the members of one booke, but we shall also haue peace and league with Iesus Christe, and by hym with God hys father, from whom we were before farre different: that like as the sonne is at moche perfitte constant a communion of all thinges with the father, euen so we also by perfitte agreement of the profession of the Gospell shoulde bee heaped together in to our booke of Christe, to be made partakers of all the goodes of our heade. I knowe you are ioyous of so happye a felowshyp, but yet I put you in remembrance agayne of these thinges in writinge, so chynce you myght exioyce more fully, if euery manne be not all together ioyous of hys owne saluacion, but all mens felicitie make euery one glad. For thys dooth christen charitie cause, that euery manne must be as glad of othes mennes comodities, as of his owne. The more that this felicitie is commune vnto, the more abundaunt shall euery ones ioye be. Amonge vs there shall no bringe of one mynde stande together substantially, excepte we be fast giued together with mutuall charitie. We canne not possibly haue peace with God, excepte we be answerably like vnto our head Iesus Christe: what so euer he hath, he ascribeth it vnto the father: and what so euer we haue, it becometh vs to ascriue it vnto Christe. Christe is the true lycht that procedeth from the father of all lycht. We canne not bee the members of Christe excepte we be bright: neither canne we haue lycht, onles we bee transformed into hym, and continue stedfastly vnto the ende in his felowshyp. Truth and Innocence is the lycht of the mynde, and synne and wycked luffes are the darkenes: where lycht is, there is life: where darkenes is, there death is.

And this is the synginge which we haue heard of hym and beclate vnto you, that God is light, and in hym is no darkenes at all. If we saye, that we haue felowshyp with hym, and walke in darkenes, we lye, and do not the truth. But wher yf we walke in light euen as he is in light, then haue we felowshyp with hym, and the blood of Iesus Christe has sonne styns from all synne. If we saye that we haue no synne, we deceiue our selues, and the truth is not in vs. If we knowe oure synnes, he is faithfull and iust to forgie us oure synnes, and to cleanse vs from all vniuersall synnes. If we say, we haue not synnes, we make hym a lyar, and by synne is not in vs.

the xxij.

What is the matter then, whiche we write vnto you, that you myght the more fully reioyce? In deed it is that, whiche we haue heard euen of hym, and hauing

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Having heard it we make it comen vnto you: that God, forasmuch as he is all together and of his own nature good, all wise, all pure, and all light a life, neither is there any darkenes in him. In vs the matter standeth not after such sort, but we haue muche darkenes euen of our selues: in case we haue any light, we are enobred in that all together vnto him, by whose free liberality we are deliuered from our olde synnes, and being deliuered from the darkenes of our former ignorance we haue learned by the Gospelles doctrine to liue godly after Chyiste our heaues example. If any manne boast, that he is through baptisme engraffed to the body of Chyiste, and hath thereby felowshyppe with God the father: where as in the meane while he liueth yet in errors a vices of hys former lyfe, dooeth playfully lye. For seeing (as I sayed before) God is farre from all maner felowshipp of darkenes: how can he possibly haue any thynge a doo with hym, that lyueth yet still all together in error and olde vices? For he is cleare out of the waye, that thinketh he can accepne Innocencie by any otheer meane than by Chyist: agayne he is deceaued, that thinketh it ynough for hym to be washed in baptisme, except he be answerably like vnto his professid through Innocencie of life: he that thinketh thus, is deceaued, and he lieth that sayeth it. For Chyiste is the tructh, whiche hath nothing a doo with lyes. The lyfte stepping vnto light, is for a manne to acknowlage his darkenes: and the lyfte stepping for the of a manne vnto Innocencie, is to acknowlage his synnes. Will ye heare therfoze, by what token we maye knowe, that we haue true felowshyppe with God? Doubtles euen by this: if like as he is light, and vordre of all darkenes, euen so shall we absteyne after his example from the darkenes of all errors and vices, frampng all our conuersion after the light of the Gospell: and if like as the sonne hath most high conorde with the father: euen so shoulde we also lyue Innocently and be all of one mynde amonge our selues. The father will not laye the transgressions of our olde lyfe vnto our charge, whiche are euen doone awaye all the sorte of them by the precious blood of his sonne Iesu Chyiste, so that we from henceforth absteyne from all synne, as muche as to be lythe. The blood of Chyiste hath washed awaye all tythynges, and hath washed it awaye from all folkes: yea but he hath washed none but those that acknowlage theyr fautes. If we saye that we are not endawgered with synne, we becaue our selues, we lyue in error, we waunde in darkenes: and Chyiste, whiche is light, whiche is tructh, is not in vs. For if he were truly in vs in dede, he would dispatche awaye thys darkenes of arrogant ignorance. And if it shall chaunce vs after receyving of baptisme, to fyde backe agayne through mannes weaknes in to any synne, and as it were a miste obscure our light: we entise beware, that arrogancie withdrawe vs not farther and farther of, and keepe vs agayne from light in to our olde darkenes. Yea we muste geue diligence, that through discrete sobrienes we maye be aduocated vnto the light that shall dispatche awaye all darknes. If the brother perchance doo trespasse agaynst the brother, let rather forgieue other hys trespass, that God maye forgieue them also the trespasses that are done agaynst him. For in dede God hath vpon this condicion promysed to forgieue vs, what so euer we haue offended agaynst him, if we forgieue our brothers fault: and excepted bys debte (euen to the bittermoste farthinge) of him, whiche hauyng bys souerayn interuall vnto him, shewd him selfe smallly mercifull towards his felowe creatures: that as to sape, he iudgeth him by the mercye of God whiche he once frely forgave

forgeue him all his trespasses, that will not pardone a smale offence vnto
 hym, agaynst whome he eyther trespasseth euery daye, or elles maye tres-
 passe. That man wyl easily forgeue hym that trespasseth agaynst hym,
 whiche wyl remembre howe many wayes he offendeth both agaynst God
 and agaynst his neyghbour: And as it is a very hard mattec for a man to
 do so as he offende in nothing, euen so is it a verye easye mattec to amende
 suche offences with forgeuing one an other. forgeue thou thy neyghbour,
 and thy neyghbour shall forgeue thee agayne: and God shall, euen as it
 were of very couenaunt, forgeue you both. I speake of those faulces, that
 chaunce euen among them that are good, yea but among men: and those
 faulces, that obscure the lyght of the Gospelles veritie, rather than extin-
 guishe it. For God forbiddeth, that man laughte, or whoze doine, or sacri-
 lege shoulde chaunce vpon their life, that are ones chosen among the chy-
 ldyren of God. There is nothing that allureth more the mercie of God, and
 swagereth his wyath, than yf a man acknowlage his faulte to God. If he
 that is a fearefull man forgeue him that acknowlageth his faulte, how
 muche more shall God do so, which is more mercifull than any man: he is
 by nature readyly bent vnto mercie, and hath promised vs forgeuenes by
 on this condicion: *forgeue, and it shalbe forgiven vnto you.* If he would not for-
 geue, in that he is good: yet he shuld forgeue because he is iust & of faithfull
 credence. See that thou accomplishe the prescribed condicion, and he shal
 not forget his couenaunt. If we with our whole harte forgeue our neigh-
 bour that offendeth vs, God shall also forgeue vs, nor onely one synne or
 an other, but all synnes: so that we to our powers geue diligence, that we
 may be once voyde of all vices. And yf we be not able fully to attayne vnto
 that for the scaptye of mannes body, yet he of his liberal free goodnes shal
 make good, that is wantynge in our strengthes, and shall cleanse vs from
 all our offences, who perchance suffereth some tokens of our olde fornic
 lye to remayne still in vs, for this purpose, that we shoulde acknowlage our
 worskenes. For in dede he is better content with a sinner that mistaketh him
 selfe, than with a righteous that ma standeth in his own conceite. He would
 that þ saluacion of men shoulde be ascribed vnto his mercie, and not to our
 merities. And nowe hath he testified, that there is no mortall manne on
 yearth, but he offendeth in some thyng. And yf we wyl say, that we haue no
 synne in vs, we make wod a liar, and say agaynst hym: and he that sayeth
 sayeth hym selfe a lyer.

The.ii. Chapter.

My litle chylde, these thynges hope I vnto you, that ye synne not. And yf any manne
 haue, we haue an advocate with the father, Iesus Christ the righteous: and he it is that obte-
 neth grace for our synnes: not for our synnes onely, but also for the synnes of all the world. And
 hereby we are sure that we know hym, yf we kepe his commaundementes. He that sayeth, I
 knowe hym, and keperh not his commaundementes, is a liar, and the scritye is not in hym.
 But whose keperh his moode, in hym is the loue of God perfect: in dede: hereby we knowe that
 we are in hym. He that sayeth, he knoweth in hym, ought to walke as he walketh.

The paraphrase of Erasmus vpon the .i. Epistle



Best thyngs do I wyte, my lytle chyldren, not that synne should be comitted the more licenciously vpon cruce of the mercede that is ordeyned, but that no man should synne at all, as muche as in vs lyeth. After that Christ hath once forgiven vs all oure transgressions, it is requisite for vs to applie al our studious endeoures to this ende, that we may kepe innocencie vnbefiled. And yet if it chaunce vs to slide backe agayne into any synne, ther is no cause why we should despayre of forgiveness, we haue God freereable, & with hym we haue a louing patroner & a trusty, who being the sonne, obeyeth wharsoeuer he wyll of the father, and witheth hartely woi vnto vs: which gaue himselfe to saue vs, so that we do brekely and from the bo: one of our heartes mislike our felous, and geue our diligence agayne to better. He alone hath nothing to be pardonid of, and he it is that maketh in excelsion for the synnes of his members, and reconcilerh the father, whiche is offended, vnto vs, and causeth hym to bee mercyfull vnto vs: a not vnto vs onely, which haue now embraced his doctrine, but also vnto all mankynde vniuersally, yf they with a syncre hearte confesse themselves to be sinners, and purpose to leade an innocente lyfe, and so purpose go on forward, and kepe it substantially. For bapelyme doeth not make vs free from the obseruation of Moses law for that purpose, that we shoulde synne afterwarde licenciously without punishment, but that we shoulde more firmly stycke to the loue of the Goddell, whiche causeth more to bee done of the wyllinge, than so many lawes of Moses gette perforce of the cōstrayned. He comanded many thynges in a smal towne, that comanded men to loue their neyghbours, euen as he byd vs, he tyeth not vs to loue hym agayne, but he enticeth vs, he pronoketh vs, he kindeleth vs, whosoeuer knoweth God aright, cannot choise but loue hym behemely. For every one that professeth God with hys mouche, knoweth not God: but he that is kyndled with the flame of gospellyke charitie, and doeth wyllinglye and gladly, that whiche he byd perfectly before, that we do good euen vnto our enemies, and that for the saluacion of our neyghbour we wyll not stycke to stand in dainger of our life, he declareth hymselfe to knowe God. But as if a man make hys boaste, that he knoweth god, in that, that he bringe taught hys principles hath learned the miseries of the lawe, in that beinge baptised he hath professed his name, neither for al that foloweth the example of his charitie, he is a liar, neither hath he yet fully learned to knowe God, in as muche as god is not knowne, excepte saythe be garnished with charitie. And whosoeuer is a liar, Christ whiche is the verye truth selfe, dwellerh not in hym: and whosoeuer hath not Christ dwelling in hym, is not a liuely membre of his body. Faith without loue is a bayne matter and a drabe. So bee woit, lone is not idle, it omitteth none of those thynges, that it knoweth be acceptable vnto hym whoe it loueth. Christ sayd he would not acknowlage hym to be his disciple, that woulde not take by his crosse and folow hym, walkyng in þe foresteppes of perfyre charitie. Therfore he that obserueth his saying, declareth in dede that he holbeth fast the perfyre and right euangelycal charitie. By trial herof we shal knowe, that we are in his body, & that we haue receyued hys spirite. Wherto doest þe make thy vaunt, as a membere of Christ, in that thou art through bapelyme receyued into the flock of christians? It is not an idle professio, it is a not stinginged professio.

It is not the profession that maketh a true member of Christe, but the imitation. He that professeth with his mouth that he is regenerate in Christ, must walke in his foote steps. He lyued not to him selfe, he died not for himselfe: he gaue himselfe wholly for vs, he dyd good to all folkes, he gaue no reuylinge worde agayne to any man, but when he was rayed on the crosse, he prayed to the father for them that spake reuylingly agaynste him. This is the gospellike and perfite charitie, whiche they ought to folowe in their dedes, that professe them selues to be Christes disciples.

Wherfore, I write no newe commaundement vnto you but that olde commaundement, which ye haue had from the beginning. The olde commaundement is the worde, which ye haue heard from the beginning. Agayne, a newe commaundement I write vnto you, that is true in hym, and the same is true also in you: for the darkenes is past, and the true lighte nowe shyneth. He that saith here that he is in the light, and yet hateth his brother, is in darkenes such vntill this tyme. He that loueth his brother, abydeth in the light, and there is none occasion of euill in him. He that hateth his brother, is in darkenes, and walketh in darkenes: and can not tell whether he goeth, because that darkenes hath blynded his eyes.

Dearely beloved, this commaundement of charitie, that I wryte vnto you, is no newe commaundement, but euen Moses lawe declared it long agoe, or rather Christe by it, whiche renewed his commaundement in the gospel: and so renewed it, that he made it peculiarly his owne. *This (quod he) is my commaundement, that you shoulde loue one another, as I haue loued you.* Therefore it is neither any newe commaundement, neither my commaundement, that I geue now vnto you, ne yet suche a one as you haue not heard of hitherto, but it is the selfe same commaundement, that we gaue vnto you by and by in the begynnyng by shewyng of Christe. And yet agayne the same is newe that I write now vnto you. It was an olde commaundement, but it is brought out of vse through the maners of the people. The Jewes learned by heart: *Thou shalt loue the Lorde thy god, thou shalt loue thy neighbour*, but yet every one serued his owne gain. Christe renewed this vnto vs, yea and loued vs more than himselfe, and he loued not his neighbours, but he loued his enemies, yea those that turned waywardly from him and that were worthy of euill. This albeit I knowe you haue heard of, long agoe, yet it ought to be renewed from tyme to tyme with often rehearsal, that it maye like the more depely in youre mynde, scing it is the chief matter of the gospelles profession. This was a true commaundement in Christe, which performed in dede the thyng that he taughte: but it was not true in you, as long as you hated your neighbour, as long as you recompensed euill worde for euill worde, and wrong for wrong. But now it is true in you also, synce the true spryng up lighte of the gospelles doctrine hath dispatched awaye & darkened of your former life, & hath taughte that none is acceptable, but he that would loue the good for Christes sake, & loue the also that are bad to this ende, that they should be couered vnto Christe. Those that folowe this doctrine, walke in lighte, & offende not in the darkenes of euill lustes. The hate of the neighbour powreth darkenes into the mynd. Therefore he that is so washed and so hath professed Christe, that he geueth not ouer to hate his brother, he is deceaued in beleuyng that he walketh in light, where he is yet in darkenes. For God reuylteth not him, & forgueth not his brother. For it is not ynoughe to haue geuen ouer these, whoredom & murdre, in baptisme, except al holowhartednes be also plucked quite out of & mynd, & in steede of hate, charitie come in place.

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He that conuinceth still in the loue of his neyghbour, abydeh in lycht, which is Christ Iesus, and stonbleth not as walking in darknes: for true charite is so farre of from hurrying any body, that it suffreth all thynges, and turneth all thynges into good. Contrarywyse he that hateth his brother, although he haue geuen ouer to offer vnto images, although he haue geue ouer to be an usurour or a churche robber, yet he is still in darknes, & seruing his owne bynde lyses he walketh in darknes: neyther seeth he the strayght waye vnto saluacion, although the gospel shyne clearely vpon him. And all is long of the darknes of the hate of his brother, that hath so bynded his eyes. Where here reigneth, there is the iudgement bynde.

Execcc.

Wrote, I wrote vnto you howe that your sinnes are forgiven you for his names sake. I wrote vnto you fathers, howe that you haue knowen him that is from the beginning. I wrote vnto you yongmen, howe that ye haue overcome the wycked. I wrote vnto you lytle children, howe that ye haue knowen the father. I haue written vnto you fathers, howe that ye haue knowen him that is from the beginning. I haue written vnto you yonge men, howe that ye are strong, and the worde of god abydeh in you, and ye haue overcome the wycked. He that ye loue not the world, neither the thynges that are in the world. If any man loue the world, the loue of the father is not in him. For all that is in the world, as the lust of the eye, and the lust of the eare and the pride of life is not of the father, but of the world. And the world passeth awaye, and the lust thereof: but he that fulfilleth the will of God, abydeh for euer.

I loue you euen as a mother loueth her children, and write for that purpose, partly reioycyng at your felicitie, partly exhortyng you to goe forward bettre and better. I reioyce at you, as my most deare children, whom I haue begotten agayne by the seide of the gospels doctrine vnto Christ, in that the synnes of your former lyfe are pardoned you, and freely pardoned you, for none other cause, but because you haue professed the name of the lord Iesu Christ, that you shoulde also remember after his example frely to forgie euery one his neyghbour. I write vnto you, whom not so muche the processe of age as the graunte of maners and godly carefulnesse so wardes them that be yonger, boeth make worthy the name of fathers: reioycing in you, that you are not onely endued with a commune maner of wysdome, wherby olde men are commended almost because of the experyence of thynges, and geue the better counsel to the ignorant yong folkes, but in that you haue reknowledged Iesus Christe the auroi of saluacion: whiche not onely is of a greate olde age, but also hath bene alwayes with the father. You being of great age knowe him that is eternal: and the more fully you knowe him, so muche the more diligently you preache him to them that be of slenderer age. Olde folkes do remember and kepe in mynde many olde auncient thynges, and you kepe him in mynde that was before all age. I write vnto you yongmen which through the strength of faith haue overcome that wycked & vnculy Satan. The commune soite of yongmen thinketh themselves happie in that they geue lightly place to no mā because of their bodyly strength. But you are more happie, that by reason of your strength of mynd, you could be overcome, neither with enticementes of voluptuous pleasures, ne w any terrours of this world. Other mens aciuitie flourisheth in barrail, but your aciuitie hath flourished more nobly against the assaults of deuils, the flesh, & the world. I write vnto you childre, which although for tendernes of your yeares, you are not skilled as yet in this knowlage of worldly matters, yet you haue already attained the thig, & getteth you euertlastig felicitie. In other childre it is this special toke of wis, if they acknowledge

their father, but you knowe your heavenly father, by whom you are regenerate vnto heauen. Let every one maynteyne that he hath, and increase in that he hath. For this cause sake, I bothe reioyce in euerye one, and also warne all and euery orders and states of you, that acknowledging your felicitie, you geue thanks to God your ourour, and hauyng in remembrance, whither you must go, please alwayes forwarde vnto more perfection. I wil rehearse it vnto you therefore, that ye can not forget it. I haue written vnto you fathers, for you knowe him which hath neyther beginning nor ending, that the desyre of this lyfe should in no wise steepe you, fryng you make haste to the life that neuer shall haue ende. I haue written vnto you yongmen, because you haue overcome the ruffynge yncendite of youth through the valiantt strengthe of mynde, and because you haue with a constanthe heart kepte the worde of the Gospell, and haue by the helpe of Christ, overcome the Deuill the continuall enemye of mankynde. Continue you still in victorie, contemne still that whiche you haue hitherto contemned, and loue more and more that you haue begon to loue. The world enuiceth by false imaginacions of transitorye goodes, and frayeth with a bayne and false shewe of euilles. As for you, let those thinges frape you whiche are euill in dede, and neuer haue ende. And let those thinges catche you that are good in dede and knowe none ende. Followe the lyght of the gospell and loue heauenly thynges, whiche the heauenlye father promyseth, vnto whom you are regenerate by Christ. Flee the darkness of naughty lusses, wherby this world layeth bayte with countrefaict goodes. It can not possiblie be, that you can loue bothe at ones, nor serue both at ones. There is none agreement betwene God and the world, there is no concorde betwene lyght and darknes: whosoener loueth the world, swarthyeth from the loue of God the father. I speake not of this world, which god made, wherin we liue, will we nil we. The wiked greedy desires of bayne thinges (wherin the common sort of menne repose their felicitie, forgetting the thinges that are truly good in dede) I call the world. It is not the place, howe farre of so euer it be, nor the raymente, nor the meate, nor the ritle, that exempteth you fro the world, but a mind that is pure fro those desires & I spake of. And what hath this world, that is not not so my hurtful? There are thre thinges, & it most chesely deceiureth foliyshe & vncircumspect folkes withall: the voluptuous pleasure of the fleshe, enticementes of the eyes, and hyghe statelynes and proude galaunnes of lyfe. For it objecteth certayne suggynges of bayne pleasures to clawe the senses of the bodye withall for a tyme, that the mynde maye in the meane while be called awaye from the studie of heauenlye good thynges. For the desyre of suche manner of good thynges, the heauenlye spirite suggesteth, whom God the father geueth vnto his chyldre that are truly regenerate by Christ. The deuill hath also a spirite of his owne, by whom he suggesteth a pernicious loue of thynges neyther true nor durable, vnto them that haue bene themselves thoroughly vnto this world. He suggesteth the naughty & oztes of lechery, so vnto the members of the bodye withall through a foliyshe and a filthie itching desire. He suggesteth the desire of synne meates & drinke to please & paunche & the mouth withal. He suggesteth the sweetness of idleness & slepe, that the mynde may waxe the more sluggishe through the custome.

The paraphrase of Erasmus vpon the .i. Epistle

He suggesteth wanton songes and chameles fables, to annoynt theyeares withall. He suggesteth the wanton euicementes of beawties and sondy kyndes of thynges to beholde, to delite the eyes withall. He suggesteth the pompes and ioyfull of riches, the occasions of ambition. Finally he allu-ereth mennes myndes on euery parte awaye from the true and euerlasting good thynges, vnto the vayne imaginacions of good thynges. Let him that is entangled with the desire of these thynges, knowe that he is not moued by the spirite of the heauenly father, but by the spirite of the worlde. The worlde, lyke as it considereth vpon elementes that endure but for a time, euen so geueth it nothing but that which shall shortly perishe. God, like as he is eternall, euen so geueth he freely euerlasting rewardes. Therefore he that dependeth vpon the succours of the worlde, foloweth a certayne felicitie that is both vayne and shall shortly be taken awaye, which, eternallye that cometh withoute thought vpon, plucketh awaye in this worlde, or at least age dispatcheth it. Truly, death that shall come vnto euery man, plucketh quite awaye as the dreame of false pleasures. When the matter is taken awaye, the pleasure perisbeth, and sorowes come in place. When the man is taken awaye, as is gone to naught, and euerlasting torment cometh in place. But he that obeterh vnto the father that calleth him vnto the loue of an heauenly lyfe, his felicitie shall neuer haue ende. For he that geueth it, knoweth none ende. The vnhurtfull commodities of this worlde are to be vsed for the tyme, yea but smallye, but moderately, to the necessitie of nature, not to the voluptuous' fulfylling of pleasure. But the chiefe studie of mynde ought to be turned to the thynges that be eternall, wherunto the vse of all other thynges ought also to be referred.

The .ccc.

Bytell children, it is the last tyme: and as ye haue hearde here that Antichrist shall come, euen nowe are there many begonne to be Antichristes already: whereby we knowe, that it is the last tyme. They were out from vs, but they were not of vs. For yf they had bene of vs they would no doubt, haue continued with vs. But that it might appaere, that they were not of vs. Accusethels, ye haue an ornament of him that is holy, and ye knowe all thynges. I haue not written vnto you, as though ye knewe not the truth: but as though ye knewe it, and knowe also, that no lyc cometh of treach. Who is a lyar, but he that denieth that Iesus is Christus? the cometh Antichriste, that denieth the father and the sonne. Whosoever denieth the sonne, the same hath not the father, he that knoweth geth the sonne, hath the father also. Let therefore abyde in you that same which ye heere from the begynnyng.

The felicitie of godly men doeth not yet appaere, but it shall be manifestly opened in the commyng of our Lorde Iesu Christ. The wicked seme to lyue in the meane tyme sweetly here in this worlde, but euerlasting sorow ha ngeth ouer them and that shortly. For the laste tyme cometh to be present, wherin (the course of thynges being turned byslyde downe,) those shall rayne with Christe that are tormented nowe for Christes sake: and they shall be brought to naught, which be nowe rebelles agaynst Christe. You haue hearde that Antichrist shall come, who being armed with all the mayntenance and iugglinges of this worlde, shoulde kepe warre agaynst Christe, and by and by when Antichriste is ouercomme agayne, the body of Christe shall be deliuered from all euils, and the members of the deuill shall be laden with the burthens of all euilles. Therefore the commyng of this Antichrist, (of whom the Apostles tolde you before) cometh not to be farre

The paraphrase of Erasmus vpon the first epistle

name of Iesus that to death goes before hande that stretched in miracles/
 I haue youe forgotten the rest as Iesa vsueth to stretch not the same
 outlines of the gospel. And from before hande hee obiects the notes of the
 righte Iesus & ownt vs also that whithout it we be not to be called our selfe
 righteous doctores and diuines and so, which thinninge from the lines of the
 gospel vnto be like of Iob, this his obiectiue make vs to haue a good conscience
 peace with that be behers that obiects the damn are waile to please to
 a mercifull father and hee will aske of god them that are of the hym,
 but those that are not is as Iohannes with no. 22. vs. I. J. E.

The.iii. Chapter.

¶ In the first chapter the father hath bestowed on vs the be should be called by the name of
 Iesus Christ. In the second chapter hee hath shewed vnto vs that hee is the same
 Iesus Christ which was crucified for vs. In the third chapter hee hath shewed vnto vs
 that hee is the same Iesus Christ which was crucified for vs. In the fourth chapter hee
 hath shewed vnto vs that hee is the same Iesus Christ which was crucified for vs.
 In the fifth chapter hee hath shewed vnto vs that hee is the same Iesus Christ which
 was crucified for vs. In the sixth chapter hee hath shewed vnto vs that hee is the
 same Iesus Christ which was crucified for vs. In the seventh chapter hee hath
 shewed vnto vs that hee is the same Iesus Christ which was crucified for vs.
 In the eighth chapter hee hath shewed vnto vs that hee is the same Iesus Christ
 which was crucified for vs. In the ninth chapter hee hath shewed vnto vs that
 hee is the same Iesus Christ which was crucified for vs. In the tenth chapter hee
 hath shewed vnto vs that hee is the same Iesus Christ which was crucified for vs.

EN. 112

There is a trusty confidence and fraile is
 as a man that receiue that a creature is if he hath giuen
 Iesus Christ vnto vs from the heauen. Hee with his re-
 uenue & diuinitie can be crucified in the same manner as hee
 reioyces that hee is hee as named and be not ones fauourful
 creature but of the creature but the creature of god for
 so hee is the that we should be by the heavenly father of the haue none
 of his creature Iesus a creature which can be called the creature of god,
 and hee is the creature to be called the creature of god for Iesus ad hee
 creature of god which can be crucified and can be crucified from
 hee as the creature of god which can be crucified from vs. It is of vs
 for vs Iesus a creature of god which can be crucified for vs of
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The Paraphrase of Erasmus upon the first Epistle

Thou hast professed brotherly love and if thou have it truly present with
the holy Ghost it shall in this calumnian thy brother is pined with or be /
I thou callst him brother, and thou wilt thou no count of brotherly affection

The first

My babes let be not our one another in words only I at the love be
the brotherly love that is in the heart of and let it expre it self in deeds,
rather than in speaking I et this brotherly love be in our day & continu-
ention sea but that it may be true in the deeds be all what I like to the
concordance as when as occasion for it shall be given a true brotherly
love is to be in us in the I et not our brother want any thing that we have,
yet let us be first of meat, or food, or any other thing of ab-
nourishment I et if we be rich in abundance of things we shall knowe by this
token that we are the the best of the church and that we love not ourselves
faster than others I et the church is I et humble himself, both whole eyes we
do I et our eyes are open we be allowed both with God and men and
be our deeds shall shew us that there is no division of love among us:
God shall by the peace of the whole church that we love our brothers more,
for we do as we believe he will like not to maintain his notorious prodiga-
lity and we shall succour him beingly without hope of reward to returne
to us by the force, neither for having given sake because we are the wonder,
but the thankfull knoweth it self as his friend and the friend of God if we
please us and a man shall be condemned by his ownnes we because
with his ownnes he escape the judgement of God I et our hearts shall be secret
pages to God and to all honest and thinking hearts but there is no thing to
be done, as I do do but God praeformeth we knoweth all the good better
that we be knoweth our hearts that made our hearts we have our every
place that is present in every place I et we be good of our hearts condempne
by our words God yet our hearts be sincere and brethren plain, yet we do
of a more & a good our that we do I et as we be we our it us to us
be our neighbour in such a way that God shall be his friend I et we shall
ly and with a good will forgive our brother his fault, God shall easily
forgive us our crimes also I et we shall give unto our neighbour, as
often as he desireth our helpe, we shall with a true heart be ready after the
of God that we shall be ready to satisfaction and necessity, neither shall
we be our wrongs I et we shall be ready to forgive our brother in what we shall not
be our wrongs by and be ready our against us which is the face of the
of God that we shall be ready to forgive our neighbour with his as we shall
I et we shall be ready to forgive our brother in what we shall not
be our wrongs by and be ready our against us which is the face of the
of God that we shall be ready to forgive our neighbour with his as we shall

forgive

For there are three in heauen, that beare witnesse vnto Christ, the father, the
 worde, and the spirite: the father, whiche sending once and restones a voice
 downe from heauen, testified openly, that he is his dearely beloved sonne, in
 whom nothing coulde doe amisse: the worde, whiche hauing done so many
 miracles, whiche in his death and resurrection declared him selfe to be the
 true Christ, bothe God and man, the peacemaker betwene God and men
 the holy gooste, whiche descended vpon his head when he was baptised,
 and that after his resurrection fell vpon his disciples. And of these three
 there is all one most perfect agreement: the father is the author, the sonne the
 messenger, the holy gooste the remembraunce. There are three things also
 on earth, that beare witnesse vnto Christ: his humane spirite whiche he
 put from him on the crosse: the water and the bloode, that ranne out of his
 syde when he was deade. And these three witnesses doe agree. The other
 declared him to be God, these testify that he was man. John also bare
 witnesse. And yf we receiue witnesse of men, it is reason, that the witnesse
 of God be of more importance with vs. For the testimonie of God the fa-
 ther is manifest: *This is my very beloved sonne, in whom I am pleased, to see him.*
 Nothar thing can be spoken more plainly or more fully: he that belieueth
 truly in goddes sonne Iesus Christ, and hath reposed at the succours of his
 life in him, so that trusting in his promises he continueth all things, that
 this worde can make a shew of, whether they be amiable or dreadfull,
 hath a witness in him selfe, and beareth witness vnto the sonne of God.
 For when (through the inspiration of the spirite of Christ) he belieueth
 euen deathes for his loue, he beareth no triling witness vnto me, that they
 are no vaine things that Christ hath taught and promised. He that trusteth
 not in god, but putteth his trust in the worde, he, as muche as in him is,
 maketh god a lyer, whiche hath promised felicitie vnto them that woulde
 beleeue vnto his sonne Iesu Christ: where as he in his conuersation teacheth
 that felicitie is to be asked of the worde, & cleaureth so vnto the comodities
 of this life, as though nothing of a man remayned after the deathe of the
 bodye. The father saith: *Hearre him.* And his life, that belieueth not, saith:
Hearre the worde. For when the sonne prayed the father, that those whiche
 beleeued or shoulde beleue in him, might haue eternall life, the fathers
 voyce was heard, testifying as by the sound of a tromper, that his prayers
 shoulde be alio word. The father therefore hath geuen vs euery thing life, the
 winge of whome it shoulde be asked, euen of his sonne Iesus Christ.
 His doctrine who soeuer embraceth, his example whosoever followeth,
 bys promises whosoever trusteth vnto, he bothe possedeth the sonne and
 hath life: the pledge wherof he kepeth in the meane time, euen the spirite of
 god, through the vnbondred confidence wherof he is bolde to call God,
 father: he that is a stranger from the sonne, is estranged also from life.

These things haue I written vnto you that beleeue on the name of the sonne of god, that ye
 maye knowe, that ye haue eternall life, and that ye maye beleeue on the name of the sonne
 of god. And this is the trust that we haue in hym: that yf we aske any thing according to his
 will, he heareth vs. And ye knowe, that he heareth vs whatsoever we aske, we knowe, that
 we haue the petitions, that we desire of hym. If any man see his brother sinne a synne not to
 beare, let hym aske, and he shall geue hym life for them that sinne not vnto deathe. There is
 a synne vnto deathe, for whiche I saye I not that a man shoulde praye. All wrongdoers is sin,
 and there is a synne not vnto deathe. We knowe, that whosoever is borne of god, synneth not:
 but he that is begotten of god, keepeth himselfe, and that wicked teacheth hym not. We knowe,
 that the see of god, and the worde is all together set on wickednes. We knowe, that the sonne
 of god is come, and hath geuen vs a myght to knowe hym, whiche is true: and that I saye
 that is true, through the sonne Iesus Christ. His sonne is very god, and eternall life. Therefore,
 kepe your selves from images. Amen.

The word.

The paraphrase of Erasmus vpon the first Epistle

These thinges therfore doe I repute and beate into you with so many wordes, lest any man shoulde perswade unto you the contrarye. But take it for a sure and no doubted certayntie, that it is true whiche you haue beleue: that euerlastyng lyfe is ordayned for you throughe Iesus Christe, whose loyued felowe heires you are. You haue already the ryght clayme and gage, and shall haue possession of the thyng selfe in hys tyme. Therfore you that beleue in the soune of God, beleue steadfastly, and put your sure trust in hym daylye more and more. He wyll not fayle you in the promyses of euerlastyng lyfe, that sayeth you not nowe euen in thys lyfe. For in dede the spirite of Christe geueth this confidence vnto you, that whatsoever you shall aske in the name of the son, you shoulde obtaine it, if ye aske according to hys wyll, that is, if you be suche when you come to praye as he woulde haue you to come: that is to saye, pure from all maner hate of your brother. For he obteyneth nothing at goddes hande, of whom his neyghbour obteyneth not forgiveness of his fault: and if you aske those thynges that are attainable to the lyfe of heauen, and make to the gloye of Christ. O riles we for the moste parte knowe not what we shoulde aske of God, and many tymes for holsonne thynges we desire hurtfull thynges, if the spirite of Christe put vs not in mynde, what were expedient for vs to aske: but as ofte as we aske after thys sorte, we are sure that god heareth our prayers: we are sure that he wyll frely geue vs whatsoeuer we shall aske. So hath he promised vs, and is hable to performe whatsoeuer he promyseth, and wyll performe whatsoeuer is holsonne for vs. Rather shall he onely increase his giftes in vs, bring prouoked therunto by our prayers, but also he wyll pardon vs our daylye offences, without whome the feblenes of mans nature can scarcely be hable to endure longe: and he shall not onely pardon euery one hys offences, if he desire pardon, but he shall also heare the brother praying for the brothers offences, so that the remembrance of suche soure, that it doeth not quench our brotherly loue, although it doe somewhat obscure it. For there is a synne that cannot be imputed vnto weakenes, nor be healed with lyght and easie remedies: as when a manne vpon a sore malice persecuteth the chylden fellowshyppe, where he hymselfe hath professed Christe, and in presence of religion goeth aboute to subuert religion. The desperate stowardnes of suche a one deserueth not the prayer of godly menne: and yet perfite charitie prayeth also for suche, wythyng for those thynges that cannot possiblye be done. There is no manne that prayeth for the deuyll, because he doeth werrynglye throughe malice oppouge them, whom God woulde well vnto. Perhappes, no prayer should also be made for them, that are translated into hys affection: and are rather to be shunned, that they doe no harme, than to be releued with prayers, excepte they shewe an hope of their repentance. Suche a disease needeth more strong remedies, and is greater, than can be taken away by dayly prayers, wherby lighter offences are taken away, which are done of feble weakenes, & not of purposed stowardnes. Whatsoeuer is committed besyde perfite righteousnes, is sin: but there be many differences of synnes. There is some synne, whiche although it be mynythe and blotte innocence, yet it breedeth quencheth not our christian charyete: as when by occasion we outchose a woorde agaynst our scruple, whiche

We are soze for by and by that it ouer that by: tohan a sobayne angre hath rusted out as a worde, that we woulde wythe by and by myghte be called backe agayne: tohan throughte the swerenes of meate or bynke re-eruyng, we take somewhat more then the necessitie of nature doeth require. And to pardon these offences God is easie, yf he bee called vpon with mutual prayers. Suche maner of faulces of children, those that be genyill parentes doe for the moke parte wyne at, whiche woulde not suffre greater offences. Albeit there is none so lyght a faulte that ought to be neglected. Whatsoeuer is done amysse, is euyl and to bee eschewed of godlye folke, and yf it bee neglected, it diatwerthe by lytell and lytell vnto deathe. But lyke as spryde remedy oughte to be had for these lightest offences, whiche men are scarce habile to auoyde: euen so god forbydde, that he whiche hath once renounced the woylde, and dedicated hymselfe vnto god, shoulde be rombled backe agayne into anye greate notable cryme. By p[ro]fessing of y[es] gospel we are made the childre of God, and members of Christ. And it is not comenient, that the children should distre so greatly from the father, and the members from the head. Therfore he that throughtlye vnderstandeth, that he is borne of god, taketh more hede that he doe no euyl, than of deathe it selfe: and kepeth hymselfe that he haue nothyng a doe with that naughtie lord (deuill) whom he serued befoze together with the woylde. Lyke as Christe beynge once dead roste agayne to lyfe, and rose agayne to lyfe neuer to dye any more: euen so he that throughte baptysme is once dead vnto the woylde, and risen agayne to newnes of lyfe with Christ, it is not nere for hym to doe that thyng agayne, for the whyche Christe must dye agayne. Let them be affrayed of the woylde, whiche are not truly borne agayne of god: whiche haue not with al the p[er]ch of their whole heartes receyued the seebe of the gospels doctrine. We knowe, that we are truely of god, whome neyther the euyl thynges nor the good thynges of thys world can seperate from Christe. The whole world is set all together on naughtines. Whiche waye soeuer a man turneth hym, there is occasion offered of thynges to rurne vs awaye quite from the innocēt vpryghnes of lyfe. And from the worldes enchaunmentes the sonne of god hath once deliuered vs: whiche came into the woylde for thys cause, to exempte vs out of the contagious infection of the woylde. He hathe dyuen awaye the barkenes of oure former ignorance, and hathe geuen vs an vnderstandyng that is lyghtened with the lyght of the gospel: to thintent we should knowe the true god & the free geuer of al righteousnes: who onely had nothyng a doe with the woylde: and we are in hym truely, in that we folowe hys doctrine and p[ro]mptes with an vpryght conscience, as longe as wee are in hys sonne Iesus Christe, whome he sent into the woylde for that intent. He is the true god, whiche onely ought to be honoured: and the true lyfe, whiche onely oughte to bee desyred. Lytell chyldren, yf you doo trulye knowe the true God, beware of false goddes, and bayne Images, whych the woylde hath in honoure. He wurshyppeth an Idole, that maketh moneye hys God. He wurshyppeth an Idole, that maketh hys belly hys God. He wurshyppeth an Idole, that for woyldey honoures sake, despysethe the commaundementes of God. There be manye suche kindes

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**kyndes of Images. Swearre you of all, if you will abyde in the worshippe
of the true God. so byche humble prayer of myne be vouchesafe to
make good, by whose goodnes wee are deliuered from
our reuouers. Amen.**

**Thus endeth the Paraphrase vpon the first
epistle of Sainct Iohn.**